

# Our Kids

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News For Southern  
Region Families

## Southern Region students earn DCFS college scholarships

Most students head to college with the basic supplies, including books, clothes and a calculator. But some students whose cases are handled in Southern Region had a send off that included paid tuition and academic fees at any of the participating Illinois universities and junior colleges, a monthly stipend of \$458 and a medical card for up to four years. The recipients of the 2006 DCFS Scholarship were selected from 218 worthy applicants. Based on their record of academic achievement, their community involvement and personal successes, the young scholars featured below can now focus on their new path toward a college degree.



### MISTY FORWE

Misty, of Herod, is a 2006 graduate of Hardin County High School. She earned a 4.89 grade point average on a 5.0 system, scored a 27 on the ACT and was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in her class of 36. She was on the High Honor Roll all four years of high school and was a member of the National Honor Society. Misty participated in the Scholarbowl Team, school newspaper, and yearbook staff. She also worked as a Certified Nurse's Aide at Southgate Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and Rosiclare Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. Now she is a student at Southeastern Illinois College, majoring in nursing.

### BETHENY JOHNSON

Betheny, of Sesser, graduated from Baldwin High School in 2006 with a 3.3 grade point average on a 4.0 system. Her high school activities included Science Club, swim team, Big Sister Program, and Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, a club that teaches leadership, teamwork, citizenship, and character development. Her volunteer activities included grant writing and curriculum development for Franklin-Williamson Human Services and child mentoring for Marion Partnership for Youth. Betheny is studying at John A. Logan College, planning to major in counseling or secondary education. Her career goal is to be a high school teacher.



### HEATHER NAST

Heather, from Valmeyer, is a 2006 graduate of Valmeyer High School where she earned a 3.7 grade point average on a 4.0 system and ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in her class of 34. Her academic honors included the Honor Roll, National Honor Society, and the 2006 Golden Apple Teaching Scholarship. She has worked at Mike's Convenience Store, Jan's Hallmark, and Bob Evans Restaurant. Her high school activities included Model United Nations, Future Educators of America, Job's Daughters and Science Club. Heather has volunteered as a Big Sister and panel member at DCFS PRIDE training sessions for prospective foster parents. She attends Illinois State University, majoring in secondary education and minoring in physics. Her career goal is to be a teacher and eventually progress to administrative education positions.



### BRIENNA SILVER

Brienna, of Murphysboro, graduated in 2006 from Murphysboro High School. She earned a 3.31 grade point average on a 4.0 system, was ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> in her class of 163, and was on the Honor Roll. Her high school activities included Beta Club, Congressional Student Leadership Conference, Art Club, Drama Club, and the Multi-Cultural Club.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Scholarship recipients, con't.

Brienna's volunteer experience included Saint Francis Care (dog shelter), Wildlife Animal Rehabilitation Center, and the Murphysboro Food Pantry. She has worked at the Daniel Silver Law Office and the Murphysboro Chiropractic Clinic. Brienna is now studying at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, majoring in animal science. Her career goal is to be a veterinary doctor.

## Youth Roundup shares info for older youth

The first annual Youth Roundup was held on June 8 and 9 at SIU Carbondale. The event was co-sponsored by DCFS and the Statewide Youth Advisory Council, and it was designed to provide useful information to youth age 14 and older.

Approximately 30 youth attended. They had the opportunity to pick from a variety of informational sessions on topics that included DCFS programs for educational or vocational assistance, independent or transitional living, employment, and effective communication skills. Community agencies also set up resource tables to provide additional information pertinent to this population.

The SIU event was the first in a series of Youth Roundups that were held statewide in June. They reflect the Department's increased emphasis on programs and services for older youth who are transitioning to adulthood. Many of the opportunities for older youth are available to those who continue to live in foster home placements. For caregivers of older youth, it is never too late to begin planning a successful move to independence. Those with questions about programs and services for this age group should contact their caseworker. Additionally, Johnny Williams is the Transition Coordinator covering Southern Region. He can be reached at 217-557-5710.

## Reorg allows teams to specialize when youth are placed in care

The Southern Region's staff reorganization is nearly complete. The most noteworthy aspect of this for foster parents is that specialized placement teams of placement workers and their supervisors have been created. Previously, the teams had investigation workers linked to them. Now, the placement workers will be the ones most foster parents will work with on a regular basis.

At present, all of the managerial positions are filled. There are a number of child welfare worker

positions that are in the process of being filled. Following is a list of managers and supervisors. The designated office is the supervisor's "home" office. Most are responsible for workers who are housed in other offices, serving families throughout the region.

### Marion Area:

- Bob Cain, Manager, Marion Area Office 993-7100
- Courtney Field, Supervisor, Marion Field Office 993-8639
- Julie Michael, Supervisor, Salem Field Office 548-7300

- Gloria Pounds, Metropolis Field Office 524-2428
- Janet Redeker, Effingham Field Office 347-5561

### East St Louis Area:

- Vendetta Dennis, Manager, East St. Louis Regional Office 583-2100
- Cindy Lolley, Supervisor, Alton Field Office 466-7014
- James Tooles, Supervisor, Belleville Field Office 394-2150
- Joanne Woods, Supervisor, East St Louis Field Office 394-7200

## United Methodist Children's Home

The United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH) in Mt. Vernon and DCFS have created a new way to provide stable homes for adolescents. The Family Supported Foster Care Program hires foster parents as staff paid by the agency to be caregivers to foster children ages 12 to 16. These parents receive employee benefits, increased supports from the agency and additional training to work with older youth with specialized needs. In exchange, they must be dedicated to standing with the youth "come what may" along their path to independence as an adult.

This program will not be the right fit for every foster parent. Recruitment efforts for families are underway, and the agency is seeking just 10 homes with a capacity for two teens. Prospective families have to have at least six years of fostering experience and a proven ability to work with the identified population. Youth are referred to the program only if they have been previously approved for specialized foster care through the CAYIT process or are stepping-down from residential care.

Educational, medical and mental health services will be the cornerstone of care for children placed in this program. Caregivers also receive 18 hours of training in the ABC model of behavior management. Mini Hope-Kimble, the program recruiter, noted that "the small program enables us to

have a more cohesive team approach that is child centered and multi-dimensional." As of July, four licensed foster homes have been approved for the program, and two children have been placed in care. When the program reaches capacity, it will be staffed by two case managers, two therapists, a licensing representative and a case aide.



*Clete Winkelmann*

"What is unique about this foster care program is that our foster parents are a critical member of the team," said Clete Winkelmann, UMCH President and CEO. "They are experienced experts and will be a partner in the decision-making process. In return, our professional foster parents will receive a salary, benefits and tremendous support, plus a monthly board stipend."

"This type of program is a welcome addition to the foster care system. Being available to my 14-year-old foster son makes him feel good and lets him know that he is an important part of my family," said Angel Stephens of Collinsville.

Additional experienced foster parents are needed to provide a nurturing and stable home for teens. Contact Mini Hope-Kimble at 618-242-1070, extension 240 for more information.

## Graduation event

The Southern Region Youth Advisory Board held its annual graduation celebration on August 1 at The Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville. The purpose of this event, which has been held for more than 10 years, was to acknowledge and honor DCFS youth who have graduated from high school, four-year college, community college, a vocational program or received their GED. Youth were identified by their caseworkers during the spring, and 28 students were invited to the event. They in turn were able to invite two additional guests from their "fan club" of family members, foster parents, caseworkers, or personal friends.

All graduates received a gift to honor their achievements. They also enjoyed dinner and dancing. One highlight of the evening was a keynote address by Michael Simelton, who was formerly in DCFS care. He now has a degree in industrial engineering and is currently an intern with Eli Lilly. Michael was a key DCFS Youth Advisory Board member for many years and is highly respected by his peers for his success as well as his ability to inspire others.



*Assistant Regional Administrators Valda Haywood and Susie Selock, and Regional Administrator Bill Peyton, congratulate 2006 graduate Larry Abraham*

## Southern Region Training Calendar

### FosterPRIDE In-Service Modules

**SIU-Edwardsville**  
**618-650-3213**

**Module 5 - Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families**  
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**ALTON** *Holiday Inn*  
Oct. 14, 21 & 28 9:30-12:30 p.m.  
(Sat)

**FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS** *Ramada Inn*  
Oct. 4, 11 & 18 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**Module 6 - Working as a Professional Team Member**  
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**ALTON** *Holiday Inn*  
Nov. 1, 8 & 15 (Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**SIU-Carbondale**  
**618-536-7751**

**Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Childhood Sexual Abuse**  
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**MT. VERNON** *DCFS Office*  
Oct. 30, Nov. 6 & 13 6-9 p.m.  
(Mon.)

### Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions =  
6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six-hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

**SIU-Edwardsville**  
**618-650-3213**

**BELLEVILLE** *Catholic Social Serv.*  
Oct. 3 & 10 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**WOOD RIVER** *DCFS Office*  
Oct. 5 & 12 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**SIU-Carbondale**  
**618-536-7751**

**MARION** *Illinois Centre Mall*  
Oct. 21 (Sat.) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**MT VERNON** *DCFS Office*  
Oct. 3 & 10 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

### Integrated Assessment Training

This new, two-hour in-service training was created to answer caregivers' questions about the Integrated Assessment Program.

**SIU-Edwardsville**  
**618-650-3213**

**ALTON** *Holiday Inn*  
Nov. 6 (Mon) 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS** *Ramada Inn*  
Nov. 13 (Mon) 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**SIU-Carbondale**  
**618-536-7751**

**SALEM** *Salem Presbyterian Church*  
Oct. 10 (Tue) 6-8 p.m.

### Child and Family Team Meetings

This instructor-led on-line training is designed to help caregivers understand how a CFTM helps the family and ensures a permanent home for the child; how to prepare for a meeting; what happens between team meetings; and when team meetings are no longer needed in a case. **To register** for this three-hour training, foster parents may call the DCFS Registration Unit in the Office of Training at 877-800-3393. Participants may also register to attend CFTM-C training at computer labs in Springfield and Chicago by calling the same number.

Sept. 23 (Sat) 8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### OUR KIDS

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Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.